IN THE CLAIMS

Please cancel claims 1-21 and add new claims 22-36 as follows:

22.   (NEW) A method of generating test code for an automated test procedure applyable to a system comprising a plurality of interconnected elements, the method comprising the steps of:

defining a source file having a plurality of tags, each tag associated with a member of a library of executable code objects defining a set of instructions for performing a portion of the automatic test procedure;

generating a test plan in a conversational language from the source file; and

generating the test code for the automated test procedure from the source file.

23.   (NEW) The method of claim 22, wherein the step of generating a test plan comprises the steps of:

translating the tags; and

generating a conversational language phrase for each translated tag.

24.   (NEW) The method of claim 23, wherein the test plan comprises a test index identifying the system elements tested by the test code, the test index generated by performing the step of scanning the interpreted tags to identify the system elements tested by the test code.

25.   (NEW) The method of claim 23, wherein the step of generating a test plan further comprises the steps of:

identifying an uninterpretable tag in the test plan; and

appending the test plan with an error message identifying the uninterpretable tag.

26.   (NEW) The method of claim 22, wherein the step of generating test code for the automated test procedure comprises the step of translating the executable code objects associated with the tag in the source file.

-6-

27.   (NEW) An apparatus for generating test code for an automated test procedure applyable to a system comprising a plurality of interconnected elements, comprising:

means for defining a source file having a plurality of tags, each tag associated with a member of a library of executable code objects defining a set of instructions for performing a portion of the automatic test procedure;

means for generating a test plan in a conversational language from the source file; and

means for generating the test code for the automated test procedure from the source file.

28.   (NEW) The apparatus of claim 27, wherein the means for generating a test plan comprises:

means for translating the tags; and

means for generating a conversational language phrase for each translated tag.

29.   (NEW) The apparatus of claim 28, wherein the test plan comprises a test index identifying the system elements tested by the test code, wherein the test index generated by performing the step of scanning the interpreted tags to identify the system elements tested by the test code.

30.   (NEW) The apparatus of claim 28, wherein the means for generating a test plan further comprises:

means for identifying an uninterpretable tag in the test plan; and

means for appending the test plan with an error message identifying the uninterpretable tag.

31.   (NEW) The apparatus of claim 27, wherein the means for generating test code for the automated test procedure comprises means for translating the executable code objects associated with the tag in the source file.

-7-

32. (NEW) A program storage device, readable by a computer, tangibly embodying at least one program of instructions executable by the computer to perform method steps of generating test code for an automated test procedure applyable to a system comprising a plurality of interconnected elements, the method comprising the steps of:

defining a source file having a plurality of tags, each tag associated with a member of a library of executable code objects defining a set of instructions for performing a portion of the automatic test procedure;

generating a test plan in a conversational language from the source file; and

generating the test code for the automated test procedure from the source file.

33. (NEW) The program storage device of claim 32, wherein the method step of generating a test plan comprises the method steps of :

translating the tags; and

generating a conversational language phrase for each translated tag.

34. (NEW) The program storage device of claim 33, wherein the test plan comprises a test index identifying the system elements tested by the test code, the test index generated by performing the step of scanning the interpreted tags to identify the system elements tested by the test code.

35. (NEW) The program storage device of claim 33, wherein the step of generating a test plan further comprises the method steps of:

identifying an uninterpretable tag in the test plan; and

appending the test plan with an error message identifying the uninterpretable tag.

36. (NEW) The program storage device of claim 32, wherein the method step of generating test code for the automated test procedure comprises the method step of translating the executable code objects associated with the tag in the source file.